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Western Reserve and Northern Ohio
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

DISCOVERY OF THE OHIO RIVER, BY ROBERT CAVALIER DE LA SALLE, 1669-70.

BY COL. CHAS. WHITTLESEY.

TRACT THIRTY-EIGHT.

What is designated on the early maps of the United States as the "Territory Northwest of the Ohio" embraced all the country east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio river. Great Britain acquired it from France by the treaty of February, 1762, but having prior claims to it, had before that time granted most of the territory to her several colonies. Probably there were not more than 3,000 white people in the territory when this treaty was signed, and these were principally wandering French traders; very few of them cultivators of the soil. In 1778 Virginia conquered the Northwest from Great Britain, and erected the entire territory into a county, by the name of Illinois Soon after the close of the war of the revolution, in the year 1787, the United States established in the same region its first provincial government, and gave it the above title, which in common parlance was known as the "Northwestern Territory." Its fixed population did not then exceed 5,000. There are now five States, and the half of a sixth, whose inhabitants number not far from 10,000,000, among whom the French element is scarcely perceptible.

The people of these States are intelligent, and take a lively interest in the history of the discoverers of their country, among whom La Salle holds the first place.

Having spent a life of the length usually allotted to man, on the waters of the Ohio, the Upper Mississippi, and the lakes, threading many of the streams on which they floated their canoes, passing over the same trails, coasting along the same shores, those intrepid explorers of two centuries since, have often been in imagination, vividly near to me.

While investigating the discovery of Ohio, in addition to works in the library of our society I had the use of those in the library of our secretary, Mr. Baldwin, which, on this subject, is more full than our own. I have also had his cordial assistance in comparing authorities, and particularly in the comparison of maps, covering the period from 1618 to 1760, of which he has the best collection west of the Alleghanies.

I cannot make full references to the books and maps we have consulted, for it would occupy too much space, but only to those which are the most rare and most important.

It was my first intention to embrace La Salle's explorations on the Mississippi, but soon found that his discoveries in the Ohio country, would occupy at least one paper. As to his operations on the Mississippi there are still open questions on which there are divisions of opinion among our best historians.

As early as 1840 I saw evidence of the presence of white men in Northeastern Ohio, of whom we had then no historical proof. This evidence is in the form of ancient cuts, made by sharp axes on our oldest forest trees, covered by their subsequent growth. In this climate the native trees are endogenous, and take on one layer of growth annually. There are exceptions, but I have

tested the accuracy of this habit, in about forty cases where I have had other proof of the age of the tree, and find it to be a good general rule.

The Jesuit relations contain no account of establishments on the south shore of Lake Erie in the seventeenth century. For many years these wooden records remained an interesting mystery, which I think may possibly be solved by recent documents brought to light in France. We knew that La Salle in 1680 returned from the Illinois to Montreal most of the way by land, and had conjectured that he may have traversed the south shore of Lake Erie; but the passage of a few men hastily through a wilderness did not account for the many marks of axes which we find.

The stump of an oak tree was shown me soon after it had been felled in 1838, which stood in the northwestern part of Canfield, Mahoning county, O. It was two feet ten inches in diameter, and, with the exception of the concealed gashes, was quite sound. When about fourteen inches in diamcter, this tree had been cut nearly half through; but the scar had healed over so thoroughly that it did not appear externally. I took a section from the outside to the heart, showing both the old and the recent axe marks, which may be seen in the Museum of the Western Reserve Historical Society, at Cleveland. Over the old cuts there had grown 160 annual layers of solid wood, and the tree had died of age some years before. This would place the cutting between the years 1670 and 1675. The tree stood a few miles south of the great Indian trail leading from the waters of the Mahoning, a branch of the Ohio, to the waters of the Cuyahoga rivers and Lake Erie. In 1848 or 1849, Mr. S. Lapham, of Willoughby, Lake county, O., felled a hickory tree, standing a short distance from the ridge, along which was once the main Indian trail parallel to the lake. The diameter of the stump was about two feet. Near the heart there were very distinct cuts of a sharp, broad-bitted ax. Mr. Lapham preserved a piece of this tree, that is now in our museum, donated by Professor J. L Cassells. The annual layers of growth are very thin. and difficult to count, but are about 400 in number, outside the ancient chopping. Another tree was found in Newburgh, Cuyahoga county, O., more than thirty years since, with marks of an ax near the center, represented to have 150 to 160 layers of growth over it; apparently the work of a sharp, broad-bitted ax.

In the cabinet of the Ashtabula Historical Society, at Jefferson, Ashtabula County, O., there was, some years since, a piece of wood with ancient ax marks of about the same date. I have heard of two others in Northeastern Ohio, which I have not seen, and which may have been the work of a dull, narrow bitted ax in the hands of a savage, and not the work of white men; but the Indians of Northern Ohio could not have long been in the possession of metal tomahawks or squaw hatchets, in the year 1670. Such cuts, if made by them, could be only a few years more ancient.

The Lake county stump has about twice the number of layers we should expect, and which would carry the chopping to a period before the landing of Columbus. Botanists explain this by the exceptional cases where there is a double layer in a year. If La Salle and his party spent two or three years exploring and trading in furs in the lake country, they might well be the authors of these ancient cuttings. There must have been several hundreds of them, or we should not have met with so many at this late period. Any person examining the pieces in the Western Reserve Historical Society Museum will be convinced they are not the work of Indians.

The honor of the first exploration of Ohio has long been claimed by the French for their countryman, Robert Cavalier de La Salle, but the details of this exploration were so meager, its date so doubtful, and the extent of his travels so uncertain, that some historians were not inclined to give credence to his claims.

A romantic mystery still envelopes his movements in the country between Lake Erie and the Ohio river, which it was hoped the papers of M. Pierre Margry would dissipate, and thus place La Salle on record in full and clear terms. If this cannot be effected by the zeal and the industry of M. Margry, during a life work in search of manuscripts relating to La Salle, I fear that we must relinquish the hope of a satisfactory solution.

De Courcelles and Talon, who were respectively Governor and Intendant in New France, sent out several parties of discovery between 1665 and 1680. They had two principal objects in view; the *discovery of copper, and a route to China through the Great Southern Sea.*

In a memoir to the King, dated Quebec, October 10th, 1670, (New York Colonial Documents, page 64) Talon writes: "Since my arrival I have despatched persons of resolution, who promise to penetrate farther than has ever been done to the west and northwest of Canada; and others to the southwest and south." These parties were instructed to keep journals, reply to instructions, take possession of the country formally, and were expected to be absent without news for about two years.

After all these precautions, a distressing fatality overtook most of their letters, field notes, reports, and maps. Jolliet was nearly in sight of Montreal on his return in 1674 from the Mississippi river, when his canoe was capsized in the rapids, he was nearly drowned, and every paper was lost. From La Salle's memoranda, covering the years 1669 to 1673, nothing has been recovered.

In 1686, Governor Denonville, writing from Quebec under date of November 8th, to Seignelay, Minister of Marine, says: "I annex to this letter a memoir of our right to the whole of that country (Ohio), of which our registers ought to be full, but no memorials of them are to be found. I am told that M. Talon has the original of the entries into possession, of a great many discoveries that were made in this country, with which our registers ought to be full. Doubtless he has given them to my late Lord, your father."—[Colonial Documents, vol. 9, page 297.

LA SALLE ON THE OHIO.

Instructions to M. Duquesne, Paris, 1752, (Colonial Documents, N. Y., vol. 10, page 243): "The River Ohio, otherwise called the Beautiful river, and its tributaries belong indisputably to France, by virtue of its discovery, by the *Sieur de la Salle*, and of the trading posts the French have had there since. * * * It is only within a few years that the English have undertaken to trade there."

Instructions to Vaudreuil, Versailles, April, 1755, (Colonial Documents, vol. 10, page 293): "It is only since the last war that the English have set up claims to the territory on the Beautiful River, the possession whereof has never been disputed to the French, who have always resorted to that river ever since it was discovered by Sieur de la Salle." As the Jesuits in Canada were personally hostile to La Salle, they never mention his name in their relations, or the discoveries made by him.

They were jealous of him as a discoverer and a trader, despised him as a friend of the Sulpiciens, and an apostate from the Society of Jesus, an order at that time so powerful in Canada that the Governor General was obliged to compliment them in his open dispatches, while he spoke severely of them in cypher.

Louis XIV. was not required to expend more money in wars than other French monarchs, but his civil projects were ample, and his pleasures very expensive. He was habitually straitened for funds, and required the strictest economy in the expenses of all his officers.

In Canada parsimony in public affairs was even more rigid than in France. The Governor General was unable to live on his salary. Intendants, ecclesiastics, and local Governors, were in a still worse predicament. It was expected that all of them would make up this deficiency by traffic in furs. Many of the dispatches from Versailles are laden with warnings against incurring expenses, which amounted to commands. Many of those sent in reply contain passages congratulating the King on acquisitions of territory and glory, which cost him nothing. Three-quarters of a century later, as related above, in negotiations with England, the Ohio country was claimed by the French, on the sole ground of the discoveries of La Salle.

The personal interest which public officers had in the Indian trade, of necessity brought about discord between them. La Salle, having no fortune, was obliged to sustain himself in the same way; which brought him in direct antagonism with officers, priests, and traders. This reference is necessary to explain the difficulties under which he labored.

According to the Abbe Galinee, Governor De Courcelles requested himself and De Casson, another Sulpicien; to join La Salle in a voyage he had long contemplated, toward a great river which he conceived, from the accounts of the Iroquois, to flow westward, beyond which after seven or eight months of travel, in their way of stating it, the river and country were lost in the sea.

By this river, called by them the Ohio, Oligliiny-sipu, or Beautiful River, and by others, Mescha-zebe, or Mississippi; M. de la Salle hoped to find the long sought passage to the Red, Vermillion, or South Sea, and acquire the glory of that enterprise. He also hoped to find plenty of beavers wherewith to meet the expense of the journey.

We must not forget the nature of the French Government when contemplating the history of Canada. The King was absolute, not only in public but in private affairs. When he said: "I am the State," he expressed a fact, and not a fiction or a boast. The men and women of the kingdom were subject to the will of one man, even in their personal relations and occupations.

In Canada nothing escaped the supervision of his officers, who were equally absolute, which explains why permission was necessary to engage in any enterprise.

The two parties left Montreal in July, 1669, La Salle having four canoes and fourteen men, the Sulpiciens three canoes and eight men. They reached Ironduquoit Bay, in New York, on the 10th of August, making a portage to the Genesse valley, and some Indian towns near Victor Station and

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Boughton Hill, sixteen miles southeasterly from Rochester. The savages told La Salle that the Ohio had its rise three days' journey from "Sonnontouan" or the country of the Senecas.

After a month's travel they would reach the *Hon-ni-as-ant-ke-rons*, and the Chouanons (Shawnees); after passing them and a great fall or chute, there were the Outagamies (Potowatomies), and the country of the *Is-kon-san-gos*, with plenty of deer, buffaloes, thick woods, and an immense population.

The Jesuits had a mission at "Gannegora," the Indian name of a town, and a fort near Boughton Hill, but were absent when La Salle and the Sulpiciens arrived there The Indians discouraged them from taking the Genesse route to the Onio, representing that it required six days' journey of twelve leagues or thirty-six miles each. Charlevoix affirms that the Genesse is navigable for canoes sixty leagues or 180 miles, and from thence it is only ten leagues or thirty miles by land to the Alleghany or Ohio river of the Iroquois. Mr. Marshall has shown that this portage was in Alleghany county, New York, from near Belvidere to Olean.

By the united efforts of the Jesuits, the Dutch, and the Senecas, they were persuaded to relinquish this route and hasten back to their canoes, to avoid violence on the part of the savages. They coasted along the south shore of Lake Ontario, passing the Niagara without examination, and reached Burlington Bay on the 22d of September. Denonville in 1687 states that La Salle had houses and people at Niagara in 1668. (Historical Documents, vol. 1., p. 244.) If this is true, La Salle must have been well acquainted with the portage to Lake Erie, around the falls. Why he should have selected the more difficult route by way of Burlington Bay, and a portage of fifteen miles to Grand river, is nowhere explained.

Not far from the head of the bay was the village of Tenouatouan, on the path to Grand river. Here the party met Jolliet and a few Indians, on his return from Mackinaw. He had been sent by the Intendant to find the copper mines of Lake Superior, and appears to have been the first Frenchman to have navigated Lake Erie. He took that route home at the instigation of the Ottawas, and of an Iroquois prisoner he was taking home to his people.

According to Galinee, when they were fifty leagues west of Grand river, this Iroquois became alarmed on account of the Andasterrionons, Errionons, Eriqueronons, or Eries of the South shore, with whom the Senecas were at war. They were thus obliged to leave their canoes and make the journey to Tenouatouan by land.

La Salle's plan might have been to cross from Lake Ontario to Grand river, down it to the lake, thence along the north shore of Erie to the mouth of the Maumee river, on the route referred to by him in 1682; up this stream to the portage at Fort Wayne, and down the waters of the Wabash into an unknown world.

In a subsequent letter written from Illinois he speaks of this route, and also in his memorial to Frontenac in 1677, as the best one for traffic between the Great river and Canada, though it does not appear that he ever passed over it. (Western Reserve Historical Society, tract 25.) Jolliet was likewise ambitious of the glory of discovering the Great river, of which the Jesuit missionaries and the Indians gave glowing descriptions.

He seems to have persuaded Galinee and De Casson that this was the better route. La Salle and the Sulpiciens here became alienated, and after attending mass separated on the 30th of September, they to find Lake Eric and the Ottawas of Mackinaw; he to persue his original design.

He had been for some days sick of a fever, which Galinee attributed to the sight of several rattlesnakes. He declared it to be so late in the season that his voyageurs, not accustomed to such a rigorous climate, would perish in the woods during the winter.

From the hour of this separation we are without explicit information of his journeyings, for a term of nearly three years. During this period the exploration of the Ohio country was effected, and in the opinion of M. Margry, the Mississippi was discovered by him, in advance of Jollict and Marquette. These wanderings, of which after two hundred years we know very little, show more originality of design, more audacity in execution, and a more pertinaceous resolution under difficulties, than his later achievements on the Mississippi.

No one has set up against him a rival claim to the discovery of the Ohio. His heirs, his admirers, and his countrymen should cherish the memory of that discovery as the most wonderful of his exploits. The historical obscurity which has befallen these expeditions is a painful fact, but is in some measure compensated by a glamour of romance, which decpens with the lapse of time.

On seeing his favorite plan of an advance by the north shore of Lake Erie frustrated, he may have determined to brave all dangers and enter the lake by way of Niagara. There are many plans which he may have determined upon, of which we can only form a vague conjecture. He may have turned his canoes along the north shore, and spent the winter in hunting in that country.

Color is given to this surmise by the statement of Nicholas Perrot, that he met La Salle on the Ottawa in 1670, but this is not probable.

Taken in the order of the anonymous relation, he was on a river which ran *from east to west*, before passing to Onnontague (Onondaga), but there is no water route passable from Lake Ontario to the Ohio, which would pass Onondaga. It is far more probable that the enthusiastic young explorer, entered Niagara river with his Shawnee guide and made the portage to Lake Erie. He could soon find one of the portages to the waters of the Ohio, spoken of by the Senecas. One of them was from Lake Erie near Portland and Westfield, N. Y., of six or seven leagues (eighteen to twenty-one miles), to Chatauqua Lake.

Another, of about the same length, answers also to their directions, which was afterward the usual route from Erie to French Creek, at Waterford in Pennsylvania. By either of these routes he might have been on the Alleghany, with his goods and canoes in ten or twelve days, if the weather was good. He would, however, have here been among the Andasterrionons, who were probably the Eries or Errieronons, with whom the Senecas were then at war. These Indians had been represented at "Gannegora" as sure to kill the Frenchmen if they went among them.

Gravier has a theory that instead of Onontague or "Gannontague," mentioned in the memoir of the friend of Galinee, we should read Ganestogue or "Ganahogue," the ancient name of the Cuyahoga. It is not improbable that the guide of La Salle knew of this route, along which, ascending the Cuyahoga from Cleveland, would enable the party to reach the waters of the Muskingum, by a portage of seven miles at Akron, and from thence the Ohio, at Marietta. La Salle states that after he reached the Ohio, according to the anonymous account, but one very large river was passed on the north shore, before reaching the falls. If he failed to recognize the Scioto as a very large river, there is only the Great Miami, which meets his description.

He may also have concluded to spend the winter in Ohio, where game was abundant, and beavers numerous, an event to which I have referred in connection with the ax marks. We have no reliable evidence that he was at Montreal between July, 1669, and August, 1672. The records of Villemarie, quoted by Faillon, contain the first solid proof of his presence on the St. Lawrence, after he departed with Galinee and De Casson.

During this period we may be certain he was not idle. It is far from certain how many men he had, but the anonymous relation affirms, that he was deserted by twenty-three or twenty-four of them after leaving the Falls of the Ohio. Where did he get these additional recruits? In the absence of historical proof, it is reasonable to infer that when he left the Sulpiciens, he moved southwesterly in accordance with his instructions, and did not turn back to Montreal. His honor, his interest, and his ambition all forced him in one direction, toward the country where he was directed to go and to stay, as long as he could subsist.

What the Abbe Faillon states in the third volume of his French Colonies (page 312) confirms this supposition. According to this authority, about four months after La Salle's departure, which would be in November, 1669, a part of his men returned, having refused to follow him. He himself could not have returned at this time without observation, and public discredit.

Such a brief and fruitless effort to reach the Great South Sea could not have escaped the notice of historians. It is not probable that his foreman, Charles Thoulamion, or his surgeon, Roussilier, (Histoire Colonie Francais, vol. 3, p. 290) were among those wanting in courage to follow him. Some soldiers were of the party, furnished by Talon, who would be likely to remain by force of military discipline.

There are many threads of this tangled skein, which can not yet be drawn out. In the first volume of the Margry documents (pages 371-78) may be seen a long recital by a friend of the Abbe Galinee, already referred to, whose name is a subject of conjecture, but presumed by Mr. Parkman to have been the second Prince of Conti, Armand de Bourbon, a friend of La Salle, seventeen or eighteen years of age; purporting to be the substance of conversations with La Salle, which must have taken place as late as 1677, when he was in France. One portion of this paper is styled a "Life of La Salle," a large part of which is occupied by his troubles with the Jesuits. "He (La Salle) left France at twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, in 1665, well instructed in matters in the new world, with the design of attempting new discoveries. After having been some time in Canada he acquired some knowledge of the languages, and traveled northward, where he found nothing worthy of his attention, and resolved to turn southward; and having advanced to a village of savages on the Genesse, where there was a Jesuit, he hoped to find guides, etc." * * * * * "M. de la Salle continued his route from 'Tenouatoua' *upon a river which goes from*

east to west, and passed to Onondaga (Onontague), then to six or seven leagues below Lake Erie: and having reached longitude 280 deg. or 83 deg., and to latitude 41 deg., found a Sault, which falls toward the west into a low, marshy country, covered with dry trees, of which some are still standing. He was compelled to take the land, and following a height, which led him very far, he found savages who told him that very far from there the same river, which was lost in the low, marshy country, reunited in one bed."

"He continued his way, but as the fatigue was great, twenty-three or twenty-four men, whom he had brought thus far, left him all in one night, regained the river, and saved themselves, some in New Holland and others in New England. He found himself alone at 400 leagues (1,200 miles) from his home, where he failed not to return. Reascending the river, and living by hunting, upon herbs, and upon what the savages gave him, whom he met on the way. After *some time he made a second attempt, on the same river*, which he left below Lake Erie, making a portage of six or seven leagues (eighteen or twenty-one miles), to embark on this Lake, which he traversed toward the north" into Lakes Huron and Michigan and thence to the Illinois.

Aside from the indefinite phrases of this paper, it is characterized by so many geographical errors that it would possess little value without the support of the following statement of La Salle himself.

LA SALLE TO FRONTENAC, 1677.

"In the year 1667 and following years he (La Salle) made many voyages, at much expense, in which he was the first discoverer of much country south of the great lakes, between them and the great river, Ohio. He followed it to a place where it falls from a great height into marshes, in latitude 37 deg., after having been enlarged by another *very large river*, which comes from the north, and all these waters according to appearances discharge into the Gulf of Mexico, and here he hopes to find a communication with the sea."

No conjecture respecting La Salle's operations on the Ohio has yet been formed that reconciles these conflicting accounts.

In nothing direct from his pen does La Salle refer to the desertion of his men after leaving the falls of the Ohio. According to the supposed recital of Armand de Bourbon, he had made a long journey from thence by land, the direction of which is not known. He may have been at that time in Kentucky or Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, or Ohio. If he proceeded westerly he was constantly increasing the distance from Montreal, and whether he was north or south of the Ohio it is scarcely credible that he should find his way back alone in the winter of 1669–70. In the spring of 1681 he made that sad trip from "Crevecour" to Niagara, with an Indian and four men, which occupied sixty-five days. It would consume fully as much time to return from the falls of the Ohio. He could not have examined the country near the river, below the falls, or he would not have reported that it is a vast marsh, with intricate channels along which it flowed a great distance, before uniting in a single bed. He could not have traveled far west of the meridian of the falls without hearing of the Mississippi, and making an effort to reach it, for it was only through this river that he then expected to reach the Red Sea on the route to China.

La Salle could not have explored the falls very minutely, and have spoken of them as *very high*, nor of the country below as a *vast marsh*, with numerous and intricate channels. If in his land journey he had gone in a northwesterly direction, he would have struck the Wabash or its main branches in about 125 miles. In a southwesterly direction, the Cumberland and the Tennessee are rivers of equal magnitude, the waters of which he must have encountered in a few days' travel.

Whatever Indians he met would be closely questioned, and if they communicated anything, the Great River must have been the first object of their thoughts. An observation of either of these three rivers by La Salle in the lower part of their course, or even second-hand information respecting them from the savages, must have led a mind so acute as his, sharpened by his purposes and his surroundings, to the conclusion that he was *near the Mississippi*.

Did he reach this conclusion, and find himself baffled by the clamors or the desertion of his men? Did he find means to procure other men and supplies without returning to Montreal? It appears from the "Colonie Francaise," vol. 3, that in the summer of 1671 he had communication with Montreal, where he obtained a credit of 454 livres tournois. Did this enable him to pass from the waters of the Ohio to those of Lake Erie, and undertake a long cruise through the lakes to the Illinois country?

Whatever reply should be made to these queries, it is reasonably evident that when his great work of 1679 was undertaken he did not know that the Ohio is a tributary of the Mississippi, or whether the great unknown river would conduct them to the South Sea. The discoveries of Jolliet in 1673 did not remove these doubts from the

minds of the Governor-General, or the geographers of that period.

La Salle, as late as 1682, after having been at the mouth of the Mississippi, was inclined to the opinion that the Ohio ran into a great (but imaginary) river, called Chucugoa, east of the Mississippi, discharging into the Gulf or the Atlantic in Florida. The French had not followed the Ohio from the falls to its junction with the Wabash. On a map made in 1692, ten years later, the Wabash is equivalent to the lower Ohio, formed by the Miami and the upper Ohio, the Wabash of our maps being omitted.

The main facts which residents of the Ohio valley are most curious to know concerning La Salle's operations here, are yet wanting. We have made diligent search for them, and are as yet unable to say, precisely, how much time he spent on the waters of the Ohio and Lake Erie, prior to 1673; what trading posts he established, if any; what streams he navigated, or with what tribes he became acquainted. The instructions to Governor-General Duquesne in 1752, above referred to; claim that the French had occupied this country ever since it was discovered by La Salle. Governor Burnet, of the colony of New York in 1721, states that, three years before, the French had no establishments on Lake Erie.

We may infer that La Salle was busily occupied during the years 1670 and 1671, on the waters of the Ohio and Lake Erie, collecting furs, for he had no other means of support. The credit he obtained at Villemarie in 1671 was payable in furs. If his map should be discovered in some neglected garret in France, we should no doubt find there a solution of many historical difficulties that now perplex us. It was the custom at that time to make very full memoranda on maps, amounting to a condensed report of the author's travels. If this map exists, Europe does not contain a paper of more value to us.

Mr. Shea, whose labors on the history of French occupation, have been wonderfully persistent and minute; is of the opinion that we may presume that unauthorized voyageurs, trappers, traders, and coureurs de bois, both French and English, were among the Indians in advance of the explorers.

The Dutch on the Hudson, and after 1664 the English, were on good terms with the Iroquois, who carried their wars to Lake Superior and the Mississippi. We have no records of the movements of these half savage traders, except in the case of Etienne Brule, and that is of little value.

La Salle was probably on the waters of the Ohio when Governor Woods, of the Colony of Virginia, sent a party to find that river in September, 1671. This party reached the falls of the Kanawha on the 17th of that month, where they found rude letters cut upon standing trees. They took possession of the country in the name of Charles II., of England, and proceeded no farther. (Botts' Journal New York Colonial Documents, vol. 3, p. 194.) William Penn's colony was not then organized. In 1685 or 1686 some English traders penetrated as far as Mackinaw, by way of Lake Erie. They were probably from New York, and having made their purchases of the Ottawas, returned under the protection of the Hurons or Wyandots, of the west end of Lake Erie.

If the Virginians were engaged in the Indian trade at this early period, their route would be up the Potomac to the heads of the Youghagheny, and from the forks of the Ohio at Pittsburg to Lake Erie, by the Allegheny river and French creek, or by way of the Beaver, Mahoning, and the Cuyahoga rivers. These Arabs of the forest, would carry axes and hatchets having a steel bit, whether Dutch, French or English; and thus may have done the hacking upon our trees which I have described. None of these people would be likely to leave other records of their presence, in a country claimed by their different Governments, on which one party or the other were trespassers.

I am aware that this presentation of the most interesting period in the history of Ohio is desultory and incomplete. If there had been a reasonable prospect of more facts, it would have been delayed, but it is doubtful if we may expect much more light on the subject of the discovery of the Ohio valley.

CLEVELAND, O., June 18, 1877.

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